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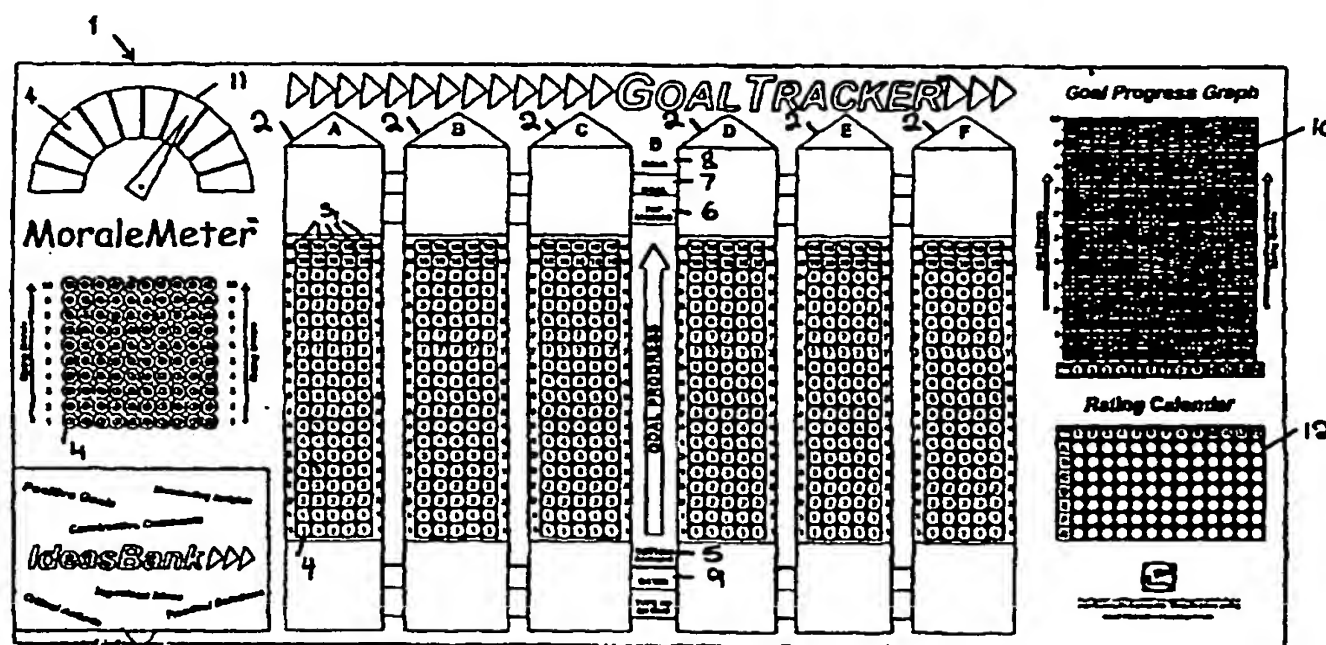
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(54) Title: MANAGEMENT TOOL AND METHOD



(57) Abstract: A management tool for monitoring over time a performance feature, in relation to an identified goal, said tool including: performance rating means for enabling said performance feature to be rated by reference to pre-determined minimum and optimum performance criteria; and a visible display for displaying the performance rating means and the rated performance feature.

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## MANAGEMENT TOOL AND METHOD

### **Field of the Invention**

The present invention relates to a management tool and a management method using said tool. In particular, the management tool is an arrangement that enables performance, in relation to a particular goal, to be recorded and monitored over time. The arrangement assists in the efficient management of tasks and facilitates the attainment of identified goals. The tool and method have particular application in the fields of business and sport, but their applicability are not restricted to these fields.

The invention has been developed primarily to provide a structured framework for facilitating the attainment of identified goals of a business, team or individual. In doing so, the invention provides for the tracking or monitoring of various tasks and of progress towards the identified goals.

### **Background of the Invention**

It is quite common for a business, organisation, team or an individual to undergo a "SWOT" (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) analysis. Typically, in the case of a business, this is done for the purposes of identifying the business' current market position and to develop a strategy for future directions. This "SWOT" analysis focuses on identifying strengths, weaknesses, opportunities available and the threats posed (for instance, by competitors). Such a "SWOT" analysis is normally undertaken in the context of the existing environment and the perceived future environment of the relevant business, organisation, team, individual etc.

There are numerous other ways in which a business or any other body may be analysed and in which opportunities can be identified, goals set and action plans drawn up. One common method of business analysis is to review hard data, such as revenue figures, profit figures, advertising expenditures, market share and client base. Typically, these types of analyses are conducted and the results and conclusions are summarised in a report. This report then may form the basis on which to set goals for the business and to determine an action plan for achieving these goals. Perhaps, a time limit will be set by which the relevant goals are hoped to be achieved and, at about or shortly after the time limit, a further analysis is sometimes conducted to ascertain the extent to which the goals have or have not been achieved. Then, perhaps, a future strategy may be determined.

However, delays in achieving the identified goals can occur because of delays or problems faced during the implementation phase of the action plan. These delays or problems may not be properly addressed until the time that the next analysis or review is conducted which can cause the delays or problems to be exacerbated. There is generally no structured tracking or  
5 monitoring of the implementation phase of such action plans so as to track or monitor progress towards the relevant goal. Such structured tracking or monitoring is desirable in order to enable early identification and resolution of any delays or problems.

There is a perceived need for tracking or monitoring of performance in relation to identified goals of a business or other body so that progress in achieving the goals can be  
10 consistently monitored and, if necessary, steps taken to attempt to ensure that relevant tasks for achieving the goals are performed in a timely and effective manner.

The present invention is directly toward facilitating the achievement of identified goals by improved monitoring of the progress of an action plan or of the performance of tasks relevant to the achievement of such goals.

## 15 Summary of Invention

According to a first embodiment of this invention, there is provided a management tool for monitoring over time a performance feature, in relation to an identified goal, said tool including:

- performance rating means for enabling said performance feature to be rated by  
20 reference to pre-determined minimum and optimum performance criteria; and
- a visible display for displaying the performance rating means and the rated performance feature.

Preferably, the rating means includes a set of rating elements selected from the group consisting of numbers, percentages, performance descriptors, letters or any combination of  
25 these. For example, the rating elements may consist of a set of numbers ranging from 0 to 10 or 0 to 100. Alternatively, the rating elements may consist of percentage measurements from 0% to 100%. As will be appreciated, any other similar means of indicating a performance rating may be used.

Preferably, the rating means is adapted to have a performance rating recorded with  
30 reference to the rating elements. For instance, if the rating elements consist of a set of numbers or percentage measurements, the rating means may be adapted to have the performance rating

recorded with suitable marking means, such as a marker pen, a marker tab, a dial, a pointer, a light or some other similar means.

The rating means may include one or more substantially transparent sheets overlying the rating elements, said one or more sheets being adapted to be marked with a marker pen, a marker tab or other similar marking device. The uppermost sheet may be removable from the rating means. For instance, after the uppermost sheet has been marked (and is no longer required) it may be removed, leaving the next (unmarked) sheet ready for use.

It is further preferred that the rating means is adapted to enable a plurality of performance features, in relation to one or more identified goals, to be recorded.

10 The rating means may include two or more sets of rating elements. Each of these sets of rating elements may relate to different performance features concerning a single goal or different goals. Similarly, each set of rating elements may relate to a single performance feature in relation to different goals.

Alternatively, two sets of rating elements may relate to the same goal, with a first set  
15 adapted to enable said performance feature or features to be rated according to objective data and a second set adapted to enable said performance feature or features to be rated according to subjective data. In the context of a business, the objective data may include revenue details, profit details, sales figures, market share details, advertising expenditure, outsourcing expenditure, other expense details, staffing details, customer levels, geographic scope of sales,  
20 share price, other business information or any combination of two or more of these. The subjective data may include customer perceptions, staff perceptions, management perceptions, survey results, media/press reports, other subjective perceptions regarding performance or any combination of two or more of these.

The management tool may further include comparison means for enabling a comparison  
25 to be made between performance ratings of the first set of rating elements and the second set of rating elements. Similarly, the comparison means may be adapted to enable a comparison to be made between performance ratings of any one set of ratings elements and previously identified performance expectations. These identified expectations may differ between different stages of an implementation phase. The results of said comparisons are preferably displayable on the  
30 visible display.

The management tool may further include progress recording means for recording the rating of a performance feature or features, rated at different times, wherein said progress recording means is displayable on the visible display. The progress recording means is also

preferably adapted to record previously identified performance expectations at previously identified times. The progress recording means may be a graph which plots the rated performance feature(s) and/or the performance expectations against time over a pre-determined time period.

5       The management tool may also include morale assessing means adapted to enable affected persons to provide a subjective assessment of their morale at a given time, wherein morale assessment is displayable on the visible display. The affected persons are generally persons affected by the performance feature(s) and/or persons involved in monitoring said performance feature(s).

10       It is particularly preferred that the management tool is embodied in computer readable form, such as a CD-Rom or other computer readable object. In this case, the visible display is typically a display screen visible on a computer screen.

Alternatively, the management tool may be in the form of a physical chart, such as a wall chart adapted for display on a wall. In a particular embodiment of this, the visible display is a  
15 display substrate and the performance rating means is displayed on the display substrate. The rating means preferably extends between first and second points and defines a plurality of value indicators, the respective values of which increase between the first and second points. The value indicators may consist of a series of numbers (eg. 0 to 10) or percentages (e.g. 0% to 100%). In this embodiment, the business management tool further includes first retaining  
20 means for releasably retaining a first data-bearing item which displays information relating to the identified goal. The first data-bearing item may be positioned adjacent to the first point or the second point.

The management tool of this embodiment may further include second retaining means for releasably retaining a second data-bearing item which displays information in relation to the  
25 identified goal. Preferably, the first retaining means is positioned adjacent to the first point and the second retaining means is positioned adjacent to the second point.

The first data-bearing item preferably defines a pre-determined minimal performance threshold in relation to the identified goal. The second data-bearing item may define a pre-determined optimum or maximum performance target in relation to the identified goal.

30       In a second aspect of this invention, there is provided a management method, including the steps of:

- setting at least one goal;

- determining an action plan for achieving said goal; and
- monitoring at least one performance feature over time in relation to said goal, said monitoring being conducted by the use of the management tool described above.

5 It is preferable that, prior to the goal setting step, at least one area of performance requiring improvement is identified. The management method may further include, after identifying the area requiring improvement and before the goal setting step, the step of obtaining data relevant to said area requiring improvement. The data may include objective data, subjective data or both. In the case of a business, such objective data may include revenue  
10 details, profit details, sales figures, market share, advertising expenditure, outsourcing expenditure, other expense details, staffing details, customer levels, geographic scope of sales, share price, other business information, or any combination of two or more of these. The relevant subjective data may include customer perceptions, staff perceptions, management perceptions, survey results, media/press reports, other subjective perceptions regarding  
15 performance or any combination of two or more of these.

Each goal is set based upon identified needs of performance areas requiring improvement.

Once a goal has been set, an appropriate action plan needs to be determined. The action plan may include the allocation of specific tasks to various persons within an  
20 organisation. The action plan will preferably include a timetable for the performance of such tasks and may further specify performance milestones (that is, interim performance targets) throughout the implementation of the action plan relevant to ultimate achievement of the identified goal. These milestones can provide a valuable reference point so as to track whether progress towards the goal is on schedule or whether corrective action may need to be taken.

25 The step of monitoring at least one performance feature generally requires the relevant performance feature to be rated at one or more times during implementation of the action plan. This rating may be done by reference to objective criteria or subjective criteria, such as those identified above.

As a result of this monitoring, if it is determined that, at any point during  
30 implementation of the action plan, progress towards the goal is unsatisfactory, corrective action can be taken. This corrective action may include amending the goal, amending the action plan which, itself, may include deleting, adding or altering tasks in the action plan.

Relevant performance features may then be tracked by conducting ratings at various times during the implementation phase. At the time of conducting these ratings (or at any other suitable time), a review of the progress towards the goal, in respect of the performance feature, may be conducted. In this way, if progress is behind schedule or other problems are identified, corrective action can be taken at these stages. This again allows steps to be taken to amend the goals or the action plan in order to facilitate achievement of the desired goals.

### Brief Description of the Drawings

Preferred embodiments of this invention will now be described with reference to the following drawings in which:

- 10        •        Figure 1 is a sample visible display according to one preferred embodiment of the first aspect of this invention.
- Figure 2 is a sample visible display according to another preferred embodiment of the first aspect of this invention.
- Figure 3 is a detailed view of part of the visible display shown in Figures 1 and 2.
- 15        •        Figure 4 is a sample rating means according to a preferred embodiment of the first aspect of this invention.
- Figure 5 is a diagram summarising preferred method steps of a preferred embodiment of the second aspect of this invention.

### Description of Preferred Embodiments

20        The visible display 1 of Figure 1 shows performance rating means consisting of six sets 2 of rating elements 2, marked A, B, C, D, E and F. Each of these sets 2 consists of a number of columns 3 of individual rating elements. In this case, five columns 3 are shown in each set 2. The rating elements 4 of each of the columns 3 consist of a series of numbers ranging from 1 to 10. These numbers increase from a bottom position adjacent a bottom anchor 5 up to a top position adjacent a top anchor 6. The bottom anchor 5 represents a minimum performance criterion and the top anchor 6 represents an optimum performance criterion, in relation to the identified goal. These minimum and maximum criteria may be specified on each set of rating elements.

Each set 2 of rating elements relates to a particular identified goal 7. The goal 7 of each set 2 of rating elements is typically different from the goal specified in other sets 2. The visible



display 1 of Figure 1 also shows each set 2 of rating elements having space to indicate a performance issue 8 relevant to each goal.

The visible display 1 of Figure 1 also shows each set 2 of rating elements having a date space 9 for specifying the date or dates on which the relevant performance feature is rated.

5        Following rating of the relevant performance feature, the rating may be indicated by marking one or more of the rating elements 4. Each column 3 of the rating means may record the rating given by a particular individual involved in implementing this business management tool or by an individual affected by the performance feature. Typically, such a person will allocate a score, between 1 and 10, in relation to the progress towards the identified goal and  
10 this score is marked on the rating elements 4.

In the preferred embodiment of the invention shown in Figure 1, the rating means includes three sets 2 of rating elements on the left hand side of the visible display and three sets 2 of rating elements on the right hand side. The three sets of rating elements on the left hand side may relate to three different performance features, each of the ratings being based on  
15 objective data, whereas the three sets 2 of rating elements on the right hand side may relate to the same three performance features, but being based on subjective data.

The visible display 1 also includes a goal progress graph 10 on which progress on the way to achieving said goal can be tracked over time. The graph may also include interim targets or anticipated progress against which actual progress can be compared.

20        The visible display 1 also includes a morale meter 11 which includes additional rating elements 4. Again, these rating elements 4 are graded from 1 to 10 and may be marked so as to enable persons to provide input in relation to their morale.

As will be appreciated, the above display means may be in the form of a chart for display on the wall of an office.

25        The visual display 1 shown in Figure 1 also shows a rating calender 12. This calender 12 is a preferred feature which enables a concise summary of progress to be provided.

Figure 2 shows a visible display 1 of an embodiment of the invention in which the tool is in the form of a physical chart. The display 1 includes a display substrate in the form of a laminated backing board 20. The backing board 20 includes two sets 2 of rating elements 4 that  
30 are used to rate performance or perceived performance in target performance area of interest. The sets 2 each extend between a first end 16 and a second end 17. Between the first end 16

and second end 17, there is a plurality of rating elements 4 in the form of boxes. The respective values of these rating elements typically increase monotonically between these two ends.

First retaining means are provided in the form of plastic clips (not shown) for releasably retaining a first data-bearing item in the form of a laminated card 18. The laminated card 18 displays information relating to the target performance area, as described in more detail below.

In the embodiment shown in Figure 2, second retaining means in the form of plastic clips (not shown) are also provided for releasably retaining a second data-bearing item that is also in the form of a laminated card 19.

At any suitable time, the first or second laminated cards 18 and 19 can be removed and replaced with alternative cards. In the case where the markings placed on the rating elements 4 are removable or resettable, the rating elements 4 and the entire visible display can be reused for entirely different surveys.

Figure 3 shows a detailed view of part of the visible display shown in Figure 2. In particular, Figure 3 shows two sets 2 of rating elements 4. Each set 2 shows the issue 8, the goal 7, the data on which the rating is made 9, the bottom anchor 5 and the top anchor 6. The bottom anchor 5 defines a minimal performance in relation to the target performance area. The date 9 provided may be the date on which a particular rating is made or the date by which a particular milestone or goal is to be achieved. The top anchor 6 specifies the maximum or optimum performance in relation to the stated performance area.

Each of the rating elements 4 includes a number, with the numbers ranging from 1 to 10. Each number is positioned within a box or circle which is able to be marked so as to indicate the rating given in relation to the relevant performance area.

When the tool is in the form of a wall chart, the rating elements may be marked with a pen or sticker as shown in respect of three of the rating elements 40 shown in Figure 3. When the tool is in the form of a CD-Rom or other computer readable form, the tool may be adapted so that these rating elements 40 are marked with a light or colour on a computer screen.

The visible display may also include a rating calendar which tracks the ongoing progress of the performance feature as rated in the rating elements 4. The progress can be displayed in a suitable visible form such as a bar graph or line graph. This provides an effective overview of progress in relation to each goal, including trends over multiple stages within a given cycle.

The visible display may also include a "morale" area 11. This enables respondents to provide an entirely subjective input as to perceived morale within the organisation, business or

team. At predetermined intervals, the sums of the various values selected by the respondents may be averaged and the results may be shown by means of a dial graph. This morale area 11 provides a quick and useful indication of overcall morale within an organisation.

Figure 4 is a print-out of a computer screen showing one column 3 having rating 5 elements ranging from 1 to 10. When the subject business management tool is incorporated in a CD-Rom (or similar means), the performance rating can be accessed and a rating can be provided by marking any one of the rating elements, numbers 1 to 10.

As shown in Figure 5, a preferred embodiment of the second aspect (i.e. the method) of this invention involves three broad stages, namely:

- 10
- planning;
  - implementation; and
  - goal achievement.

Typically the planning stage will involve several steps including:

- 15
- the identification of critical issues;
  - collecting relevant data;
  - setting appropriate goals;
  - setting out an action plan.

The implementation stage will generally involve several steps including:

- 20
- rating one or more performance features;
  - tracking these one or more performance features;
  - reviewing progress towards the relevant goal in relation to the performance features.

If the review shows that progress towards the goal is unsatisfactory or behind schedule, the goal and/or the action plan may be amended. In doing this, particular tasks in the action 25 plan may be added, deleted or varied.

This may be done until the goal is achieved. Once the goal is achieved, rewards may be allocated to appropriate persons involved in achieving the goal.

Subsequently, performance standards may be raised. Once this is done, new issues may be identified as requiring attention in order to meet the higher standards. The abovementioned process may then be put in place again to achieve goals consistent with the higher standards.

As set out above, one aspect of the invention is a management method. A preferred  
5 embodiment of this is a business management method as described below. As will be appreciated, the following description is a preferred embodiment only and the invention is not limited to the embodiment of the method described in this example.

At the outset, there is generally a set-up phase. During this set-up phase, a system administrator is appointed in order to administer and facilitate implementation of the method.  
10 If the business management tool described above (in software format) is to be used, this software is installed at the set-up stage. A team of persons is selected which is to be involved in implementation of the business method.

During the set-up stage, the system administrator (or another person) generally explains to the team the objectives, components and steps of the business management method and the  
15 roles of the various members of the team. If the team is a large one (eg more than 10 persons), a forum of persons may be selected from the team. The forum typically includes a leader who is responsible for chairing forum meetings, planning the course of implementation of the business management method, liaising with the team and liaising with management and other persons within the business organisation. A team administrator may also be appointed whose  
20 responsibilities include administering the business management method and overseeing proper use of the relevant software package by which the business management method is implemented. A supervisor may also be appointed whose tasks include supervising the design and tracking of the identified steps of the business management method and the particular tasks of the various team members. The supervisor is also responsible for ensuring that progress  
25 towards the identified goals keeps up with progress as planned in any action plan. A motivator may also be appointed whose tasks include highlighting the benefits of the business management method to team members and other members of the business organisation, organising an effective incentive scheme as part of the business management method and collates and shortlists ideas received from team members or other members of the business  
30 organisation.

After the set-up, a data collection phase occurs. During this phase, management initiatives or issues requiring attention are identified so that they can be addressed by the business management method. Members of the team are invited to provide comments, information or opinions in relation to these initiatives or issues. These initiatives or issues may

relate to any aspect of the business organisation including profitability, customer service, management/staff relations, public relations etc. Similarly, the initiatives or issues may relate to the business as a whole or to a division of the business, a team within a division or even an individual staff member. Also, surveys may be conducted of staff, customers or other persons  
5 to obtain information relevant to the particular initiatives or issues.

After the data collection phase, one or more goals need to be set. Typically, the team analyses the information and data collected in the data collection phase and begins to formulate one or more goals. The decision as to which goals are to be pursued may be a decision of the team, of the forum or of the management of the business organisation. Once the goal (or goals)  
10 is identified, tasks for achieving the goal(s) are discussed and formalised, generally by the forum. It is generally preferable for the entire team to be involved in the goal setting process. Using the data previously collected and guided by the forum, the team can determine the goal or goals to be achieved.

The team, again guided by the forum, then needs to work out an action plan for  
15 achieving the goal or goals. The action plan may include the identification and allocation of specific tasks to various persons within the team and will preferably include a timetable for the performance of such tasks. The action plan may also include milestones (or interim targets) to be achieved in respect of the relevant performance feature.

A significant feature of the business management method is the rating of progress  
20 towards a particular goal or goals. At one or more times during the implementation phase, goal progress is rated. This rating may be done by reference to objective criteria or subjective criteria. In this way, goal progress is tracked and if there is any discrepancy between the actual progress and the desired progress (for instance, by reference to the milestones), steps can then be taken to bring the two into substantial alignment. Preferably, rating of goal progress is  
25 conducted at numerous times during the implementation phase so that progress proceeds substantially in line with the action plan until each goal is achieved. Alternatively, the goal may be varied (for instance, if the original goal is regarded as unrealistic). This implementation procedure is substantially the same whether the relevant goal is a corporate goal, a division goal, a team goal or a personal goal.

30 Progress towards each goal may be tracked by means of a chart. The chart may track the goal progress by reference to the abovementioned objective and subjective criteria. Such a chart is a helpful reference tool which enables ready reference to goal progress over time. If additional goals are being pursued simultaneously, the progress of these goals can also be tracked on either the same chart or on different charts. These charts may be stored in a

computer and viewable on one or more computer screens which enables members of the team (and other authorised persons) to readily access these charts in order to obtain an update of progress towards the relevant goal or goals. Such ongoing tracking of goal progress is a very helpful feature of the subject business method as it makes possible regular or even constant  
5 monitoring of goal progress which in turn enables any shortfalls in the implementation of tasks to be rectified on an ongoing basis.

The business management method may further include incentives, such as prizes or awards for satisfactory completion of tasks and/or achievement of goals. These prizes or awards may be any suitable incentive such as shopping vouchers, travel vouchers, financial  
10 payments or recognition certificates/awards.

The present invention provides the ability to reuse rating elements for either different purposes or to allow on-going finetuning of an action plan directed towards achieving a particular goal.

It will be appreciated that the particular form of the rating means, the rating elements,  
15 the visible display and other aspects of this invention are not limited to the embodiments described above. For example, the sets of rating elements could alternatively be arcuate scales or any other suitable shape that enables graduated measurements to be made. The rating elements need not be numbers or percentages. They could, for example, be graduated colours or shades, appropriate words (eg. low, medium or high) or any other suitable indicator of  
20 relative value.

The claims defining this invention are as follows:

1. A management tool for monitoring over time a performance feature, in relation to an identified goal, said tool including:
  - performance rating means for enabling said performance feature to be rated by reference to predetermined minimum and optimum performance criteria; and
  - a visible display for displaying the performance rating means and the rated performance feature.
2. A management tool according to claim 1, wherein the rating means includes a set of rating elements selected from the group consisting of numbers, percentages, performance descriptors, letters or any combination of these.
3. A management tool according to claim 2, wherein the rating elements consist of a set of numbers ranging from 0 to 10 or 0 to 100.
4. A management tool according to claim 2 or claim 3, wherein the rating means is adapted to have a performance rating recorded with reference to the rating elements.
5. A management tool according to claim 4, wherein the rating means includes a surface or screen on which a performance rating marking may be made.
6. A management tool according to claim 5, wherein the rating means may include at least one substantially transparent sheet overlying the rating elements, said sheet being adapted to be marked with marking means.
7. A management tool according to any one of claims 2 to 6, wherein the rating means includes two or more sets of rating elements.
8. A management tool according to claim 7, wherein each set of rating elements relates to different performance features, concerning one or more identified goals
9. A management tool according to claim 7, wherein each set of rating elements relates to a single performance feature concerning two or more goals.
10. A management tool according to claim 7, including two sets of rating elements relating to a single goal, wherein a first set of rating elements is adapted to enable said performance feature or features to be rated according to objective data and a second set of rating elements is adapted to enable said performance feature or features to be rated according to subjective data.
11. A management tool according to claim 10, wherein the objective data includes revenue details, profit details, sales figures, market share details, advertising expenditure, outsourcing

expenditure, other expense details, staffing details, customer levels, geographic scope of sales, share price, other business information, or any combination of two or more of these.

12. A management tool according to claim 10 or claim 11, wherein the subjective data includes customer perceptions, staff perceptions, management perceptions, survey results, 5 media/press reports, other subjective perceptions regarding performance, or any combination of two or more of these.
13. A management tool according to any one of claims 1 to 12, further including progress recording means for recording ratings of a performance feature or features, rated at different times, wherein said progress recording means is displayable on the visible display.
- 10 14. A management tool according to claim 13, wherein the progress recording means is a graph which plots the rated performance feature or features against time over a predetermined time period.
15. A management tool according to any one of claims 1 to 14, further including morale assessing means, adapted to enable persons affected by the performance feature and/or persons 15 involved in monitoring said performance feature to provide a subjective assessment of their morale at a given time, wherein the morale assessment is displayable on the visible display.
16. A management tool according to any one of claims 10 to 15, further including comparison means for enabling a comparison to be made between the performance ratings of the first set of rating elements and the second set of rating elements.
- 20 17. A management tool according to claim 16, wherein the comparison means is adapted to enable a comparison to be made between a performance rating of a set of rating elements and a previously identified performance expectation.
18. A management tool according to claim 16 or claim 17, wherein result of said comparison is displayable on the visible display.
- 25 19. A management tool according to any one of claims 1 to 18, wherein said tool is embodied in computer-readable form.
20. A management tool according to claim 19, wherein said tool is embodied in a CD-ROM.
21. A management tool according to claim 19 or claim 20, wherein the visible display is a 30 display screen visible on a computer screen.
22. A management tool according to any one of claims 1 to 18, wherein said tool is embodied in a physical chart.



23. A management tool according to claim 22, wherein the visible display is a display substrate and the performance rating means is displayed on the display substrate.
24. A management tool according to claim 23, wherein the rating means extends between first and second points and defines a plurality of value indicators, the respective values of which  
5 increase between the first and second points.
25. A management tool according to claim 24, wherein the value indicators consist of a series of numbers or percentages.
26. A management tool according to any one of claims 22 to 25, further including first retaining means for releasably retaining a first data bearing item which displays information  
10 relating to the identified goal.
27. A management tool according to claim 26, wherein the first data-bearing item is positioned adjacent the first point or the second point.
28. A management tool according to claim 26 or claim 27, further including second retaining means for releasably retaining a second data-bearing item which displays information  
15 in relation to the identified goal.
29. A management tool according to claim 28, wherein the first retaining means is positioned adjacent to the first point and the second retaining means is positioned adjacent to the second point.
30. A management tool according to any one of claims 26 to 29, wherein the first data-  
20 bearing item defines a predetermined minimal performance threshold in relation to the identified goal.
31. A management tool according to claim 30, wherein the second data-bearing item defines a predetermined optimum performance target in relation to the identified goal.
32. A management tool according to any one of claims 24 to 31, wherein the rating means  
25 includes a graduated scale on the display substrate extending between the first and second points and defining a plurality of value indicators, the respective values of which increase between the first and second points.
33. A management method, including the steps of:
- setting at least one goal;
  - 30 • determining an action plan for achieving said goal; and

- monitoring at least one performance feature over time in relation to said goal, said monitoring being conducted by the use of the management tool according to any one of claims 1 to 32.

34. A management method, according to claim 33, further including, prior to the goal  
5 setting step, identifying at least one performance area for improvement.

35. A management method, according to claim 34, further including, after identifying the performance area for improvement and before the goal setting step, obtaining data relevant to said performance area.

36. A management method, according to claim 35, wherein the data includes objective data,  
10 subjective data or both.

37. A management method, according to claim 36, wherein the objective data includes revenue details, profit details, sales figures, market share, advertising expenditure, outsourcing expenditure, other expense details, staffing details, customer levels, geographic scope of sales, share price, other business information, or any combination of two or more of these.

15 38. A management method, according to claim 36 or 37, wherein the subjective data includes customer perceptions, staff perceptions, management perceptions, survey results, media/press reports, other subjective perceptions regarding performance, or any combination of two or more of these.

39. A management method according to any one of claims 33 to 38, wherein the action plan  
20 includes:

- identified tasks;
- a timetable for performing the identified tasks; and
- performance milestones.

40. A management method according to any one of claims 33 to 38, wherein the monitoring  
25 step includes rating said at least one performance feature at two or more different times.

41. A management method according to claim 40, further including a step of comparing the rated performance feature against the applicable performance milestone.

42. A management method according to claim 41, further including the step of reviewing the goal or the action plan or both based on the results of said comparison.

30 43. A management method according to claim 42, further including the step of amending the goal or the action plan or both based on the results of said review.

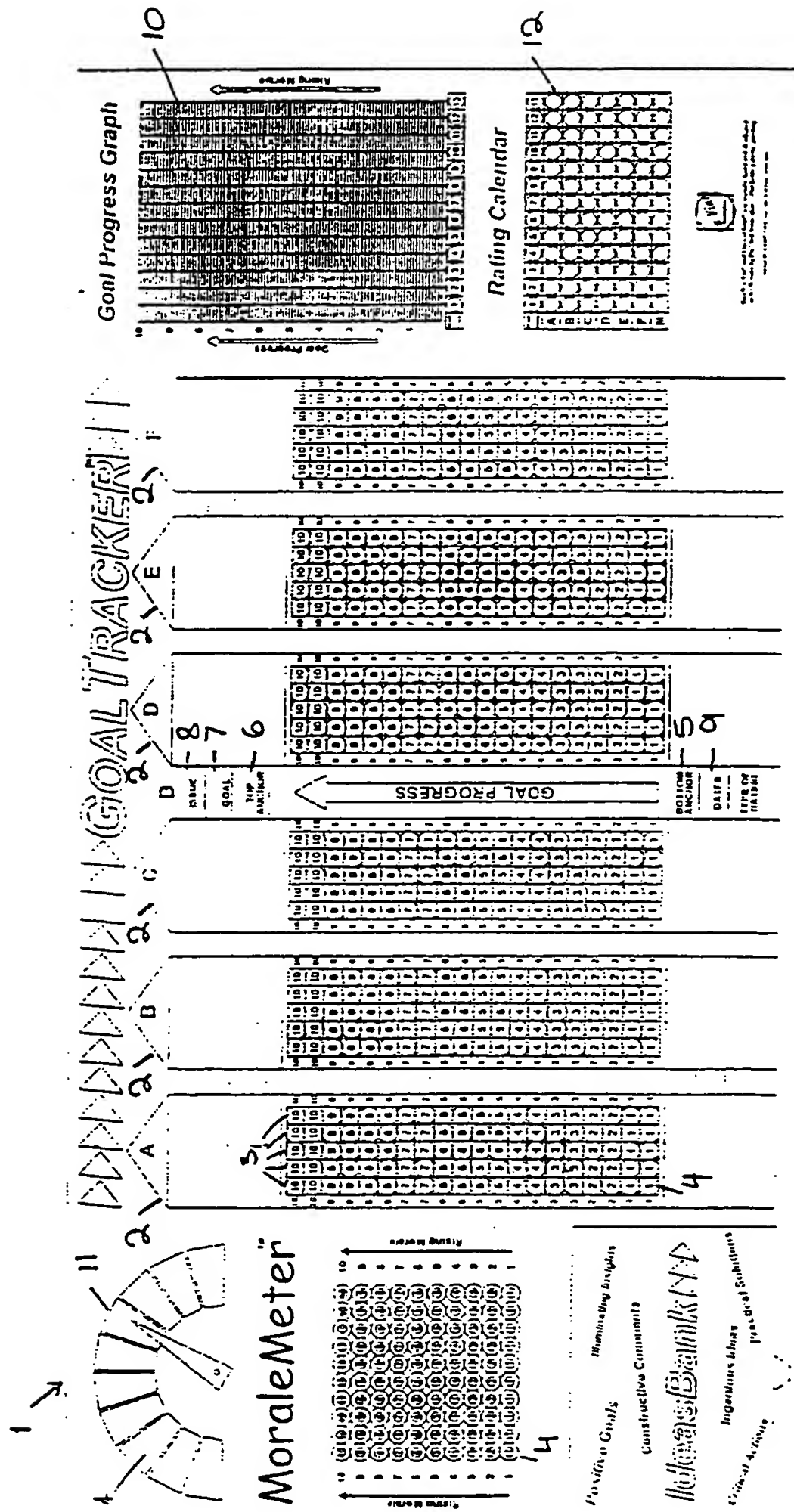
**AMENDED CLAIMS**

[received by the International Bureau on 13 November 2000 (13.11.00)  
original claim 1 amended; remaining claims unchanged (1 page)]

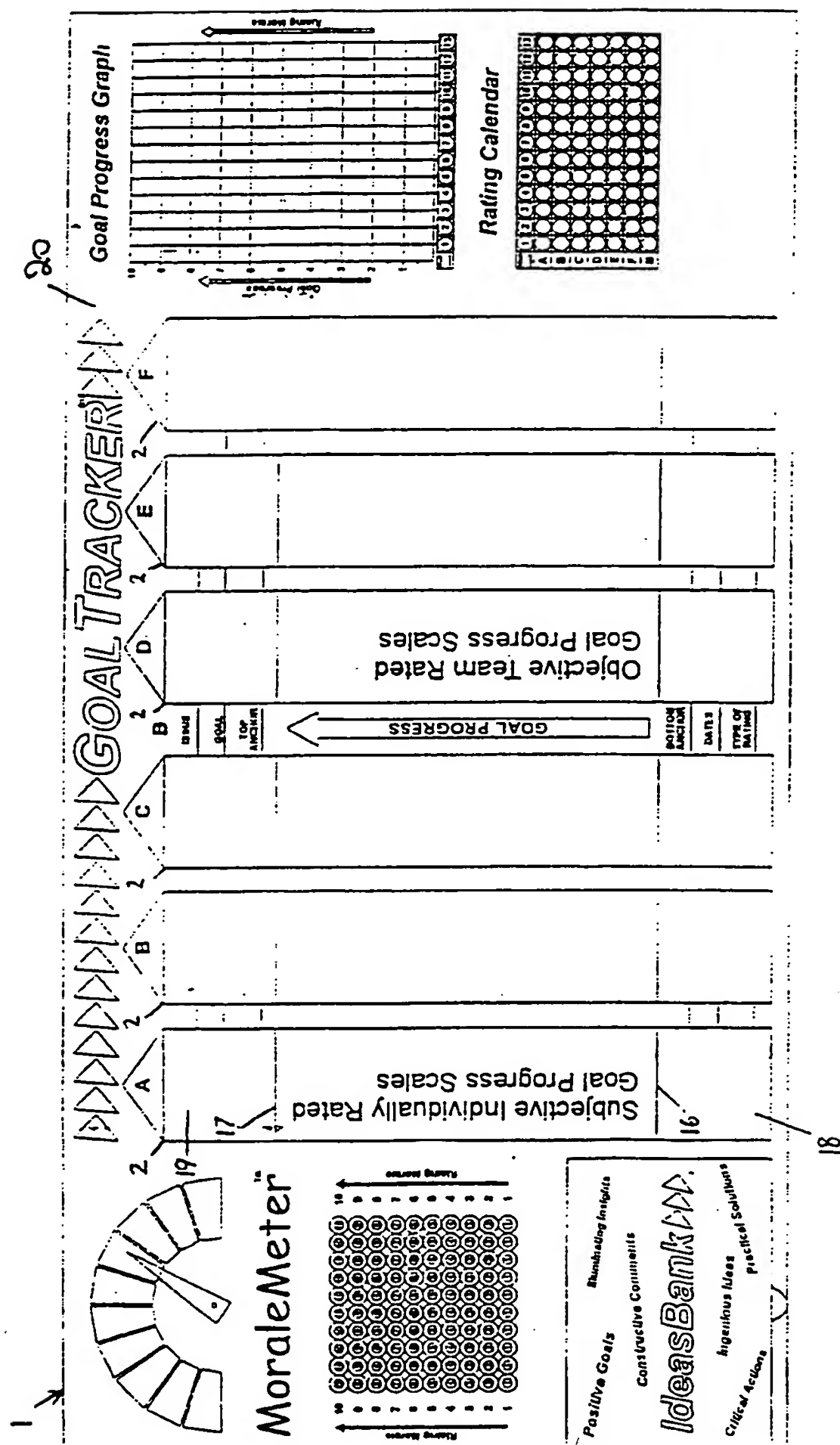
The claims defining this invention are as follows:

1. A management tool for monitoring over time a performance feature, in relation to an identified goal, said tool including:
  - performance rating means for enabling said performance feature to be rated, by  
5 reference to objective data, relative to predetermined minimum and optimum performance criteria; and
  - a visible display for displaying the performance rating means and the rated performance feature.
2. A management tool according to claim 1, wherein the rating means includes a set of  
10 rating elements selected from the group consisting of numbers, percentages, performance descriptors, letters or any combination of these.
3. A management tool according to claim 2, wherein the rating elements consist of a set of numbers ranging from 0 to 10 or 0 to 100.
4. A management tool according to claim 2 or claim 3, wherein the rating means is adapted  
15 to have a performance rating recorded with reference to the rating elements.
5. A management tool according to claim 4, wherein the rating means includes a surface or screen on which a performance rating marking may be made.
6. A management tool according to claim 5, wherein the rating means may include at least one substantially transparent sheet overlying the rating elements, said sheet being adapted to be  
20 marked with marking means.
7. A management tool according to any one of claims 2 to 6, wherein the rating means includes two or more sets of rating elements.
8. A management tool according to claim 7, wherein each set of rating elements relates to different performance features, concerning one or more identified goals
- 25 9. A management tool according to claim 7, wherein each set of rating elements relates to a single performance feature concerning two or more goals.
10. A management tool according to claim 7, including two sets of rating elements relating to a single goal, wherein a first set of rating elements is adapted to enable said performance feature or features to be rated according to objective data and a second set of rating elements is  
30 adapted to enable said performance feature or features to be rated according to subjective data.
11. A management tool according to claim 10, wherein the objective data includes revenue details, profit details, sales figures, market share details, advertising expenditure, outsourcing

Fig. 1



**Fig. 2**



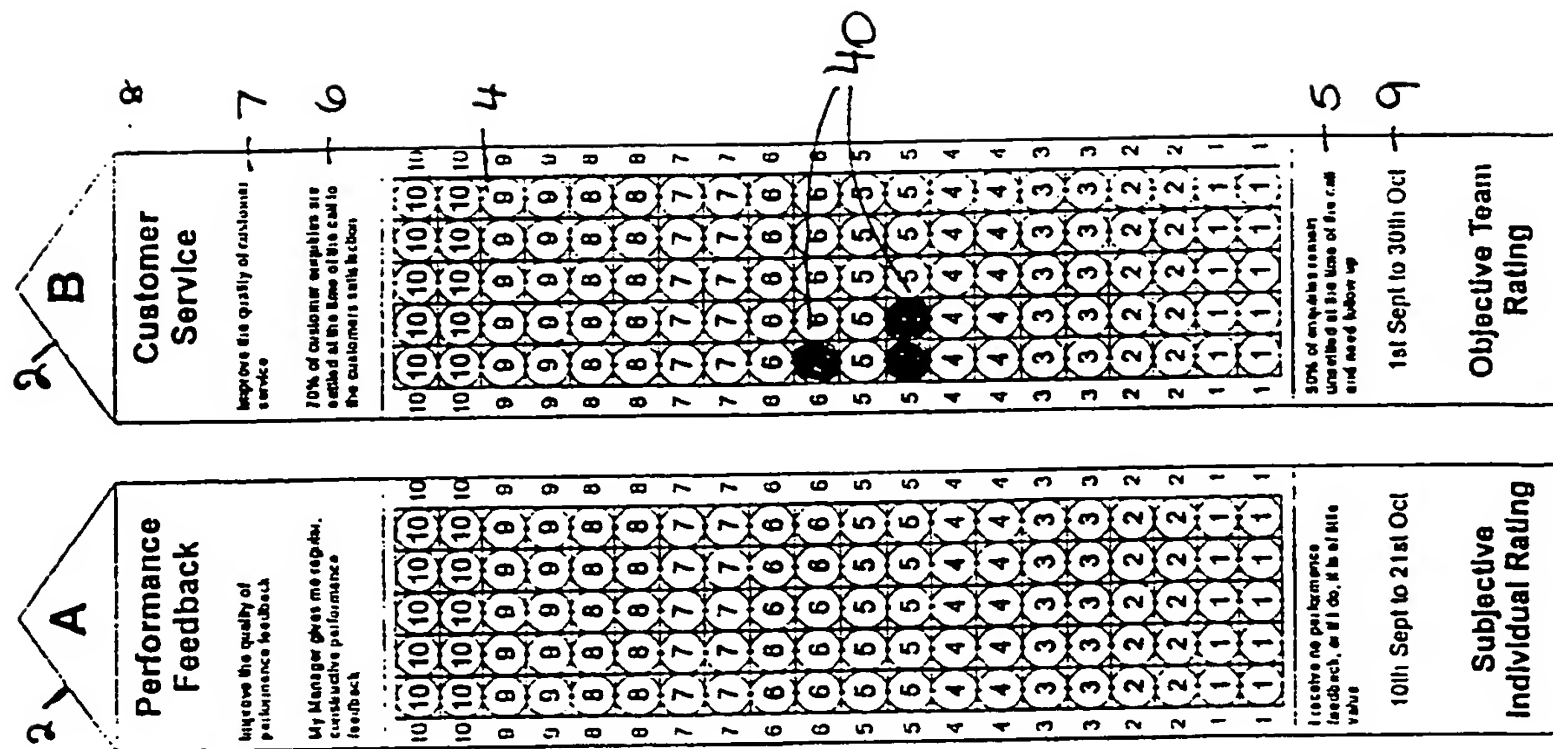


Fig. 3

[illegible]

**Fig. 4**

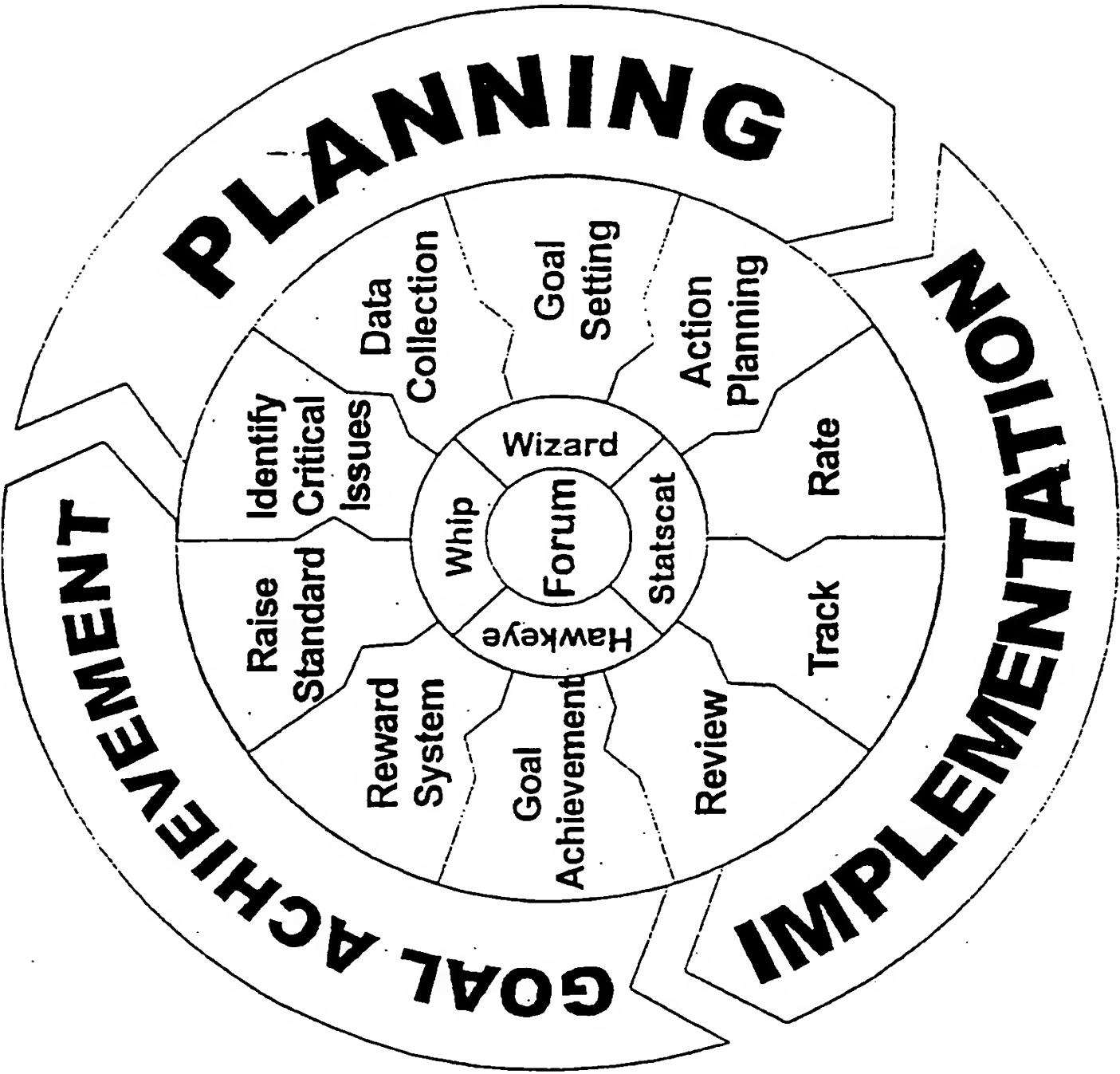


Fig. 5



## INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.

PCT/AU00/00904

<b>A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER</b>												
Int. Cl. <sup>7</sup> : G06F 17/60												
According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC												
<b>B. FIELDS SEARCHED</b>												
Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols) IPC: G06F 17/60												
Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched												
Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practicable, search terms used) WPAT with keywords												
<b>C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT</b>												
Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.										
X	US 5239460 A (LaROCHE) 24 August 1993	1 - 43										
X	US 5500795 A (POWERS et al) 19 March 1996	1 - 43										
X	WO 97/31320 A (CULLEN EGAN DELL LIMITED et al) 28 August 1997.	1 - 43										
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> See patent family annex												
<p>* Special categories of cited documents:</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>"A" document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance</td> <td>"T" later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention</td> </tr> <tr> <td>"E" earlier application or patent but published on or after the international filing date</td> <td>"X" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone</td> </tr> <tr> <td>"L" document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified)</td> <td>"Y" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art</td> </tr> <tr> <td>"O" document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means</td> <td>"&amp;" document member of the same patent family</td> </tr> <tr> <td>"P" document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>			"A" document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance	"T" later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention	"E" earlier application or patent but published on or after the international filing date	"X" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone	"L" document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified)	"Y" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art	"O" document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means	"&" document member of the same patent family	"P" document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed	
"A" document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance	"T" later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention											
"E" earlier application or patent but published on or after the international filing date	"X" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone											
"L" document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified)	"Y" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art											
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"P" document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed												
Date of the actual completion of the international search 11 September 2000		Date of mailing of the international search report 13 SEP 2000										
Name and mailing address of the ISA/AU AUSTRALIAN PATENT OFFICE PO BOX 200, WODEN ACT 2606, AUSTRALIA E-mail address: pct@ipaaustralia.gov.au Facsimile No. (02) 6285 3929		Authorized officer  J.W. THOMSON Telephone No : (02) 6283 2214										

## INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.

PCT/AU00/00904

C (Continuation). DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT		
Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X	US 5684964 A (POWERS et al) 4 November 1997	1 - 43
X	US 5926794 A (FETHE) 20 July 1999	1 - 43

**INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT**  
Information on patent family members

International application No.  
PCT/AU00/00904

This Annex lists the known "A" publication level patent family members relating to the patent documents cited in the above-mentioned international search report. The Australian Patent Office is in no way liable for these particulars which are merely given for the purpose of information.

Patent Document Cited in Search Report				Patent Family Member			
US	5239460	CA	2053745				
US	5500795	AU	44336/93	DE	69327691	EP	587290
US	5684964						
WO	97/31320	AU	17602/97	EP	954813		
							END OF ANNEX